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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 06RIYADH4724, A LOVE FEST: THE "KING OF HEARTS" VISITS THE EP

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#06RIYADH4724**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06RIYADH4724</a>	<a href="#">2006-06-13 09:35</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Riyadh</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/06/22/116306/wikileaks-saudi-crackdown-on-shiites.html>

VZCZCXRO6795  
PP RUEHDE  
DE RUEHRH #4724 1640935  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 130935Z JUN 06  
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8561  
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2653  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0591

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIYADH 004724

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DHAHRAN SENDS  
PARIS FOR ZEYA, LONDON FOR TSOU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SA](#)  
SUBJECT: A LOVE FEST: THE "KING OF HEARTS" VISITS THE EP

Classified by Consul General John Kincannon for reason 1.4  
(d).

¶1. (U) King Abdullah visited the Eastern Province (EP) June 10-12, provoking great public displays of adoration and allegiance and some private questioning about his commitment to reform. The King's agenda included a ceremonial opening of planned industrial city Jubail-II, launching of numerous petrochemical and other ventures, two receptions in the Qatif area (one organized by the Sunni Banu Khalid tribe, which dominates the Sunni enclave of Ank just outside the Qatif oasis, the other organized by Qatifi Shi'a), a trip to Al-Ahsa, and the weekly Council of Ministers meeting. Government spokesmen and the press billed the King's visit to the EP as the first stop in his first regional inspection tour as King.

¶2. (U) The province's notables, led by EP Emir Prince Mohammed bin Fahd (MbF), organized impressive displays of adoration and allegiance to the King. ConOffs estimate that the Emirate arranged for at least 50 large welcoming billboards within a two-mile radius of the King Abdulaziz Air Base in Dhahran, where the King's plane landed. Similar signage covered the highway to Jubail. The local daily newspaper, Al-Youm, carried extensive and adoring coverage of the visit and even more extensive welcoming advertisements sponsored by the region's top companies. "Welcome, King of Hearts" read the advertisement from Ma'an Al-Sanea's Saad Group, which covered the bottom half of Al-Youm's front page for several days running.

¶3. (C) The visit also offered various EP actors opportunities to promote their own agendas, albeit discreetly. The Shi'a appeared to have two main messages for the King: that the area needs more development projects, especially in education; and that the Shi'a are loyal. "It was a great opportunity to greet the King and tell him how loyal we are to this country," noted Dr. Mohammed Al-Khunaizi, who attended the reception in Qatif. On the business side, SipChem, a rapidly expanding, privately held petrochemical company whose largest shareholder is the Al-Zamil group and which recently was granted a coveted additional allocation of gas feedstock, received a public vote of confidence in King Abdullah's "launching" of its butanediol plant in Jubail. Ma'an Al-Sanea, one of the wealthiest EP magnates and a rumored front-man for MbF's business interests, also received press coverage for his role in arranging (and likely funding) the initial welcoming festivities for King Abdullah in Dammam on June 10.

¶4. (C) Comment: Most Saudi EP residents genuinely like and feel allegiance to the King. His visit to the EP astutely touched the province's major bases: economic development, as symbolized by the booming petrochemical industry in Jubail; the Shi'a community; the major population centers - Greater Dammam, Qatif, and Al-Ahsa; and the tribes. (Note: While Saudi Aramco was not included on the King's agenda this visit, he opened an Aramco project in December 2004 on his most recent visit to the EP, when he was Crown Prince. End note.) While the King's visit to Qatif will surely cement his reputation among Shi'a as the most sympathetic of the senior Al Saud, our Shi'a contacts make a clear distinction between their affection for the King and their evaluation of SAG performance. "I am optimistic, yes, and I know the King has good intentions, but changes are coming too slowly," one prominent Shi'a businessman told the CG several weeks ago. Asked on the evening of the King's visit to Qatif whether he thought King Abdullah was a true believer in reform, a Shi'a cleric replied, after a moment's hesitation, "Even if he is convinced, there are still so many other people in the government, down to the officials in our communities, who must also be convinced. I don't see that happening." End comment.

(APPROVED: KINCANNON)  
OBERWETTER